

North Korea and the Opinion of Fascism: A Case of Mistaken Identity

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Abstract

This paper addresses the recent opinion in circulation among some academics and journalists that North Korea has something to do with the extreme right-wing doctrine of fascism. The author explains that the association is in factual error and neglects the politics and economics of North Korea, which has a history of pre-liberation and post-liberation struggle against Imperial Japanese fascism. Neither “fascist” nor “fascistic” in its political perspective or economic structure, North Korea is a left-nationalist formation with a transitional national state-socialist system in the tradition of national-Stalinism.

Keywords: fascism, *Juche* ideology, Kim Il Sung, national-Stalinism, *Songun* ideology

Introduction

Recently, an opinion has been in circulation that North Korea has something to do with fascism, the aggressive, imperialistic, and ultranationalist political doctrine and movement that grew out of the dislocations of the First World War and the Great Depression, manifesting in Italy in the 1920s, assuming the super-racist form of Nazism in Germany in the 1930s, and being implemented from above in Imperial Japan. Considering that fascism is imperialistic and that its extreme right-wing politics is violently anticomunist and antisocialist, the association of national state-socialist North Korea with fascism is frankly strange.

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The basic reasoning behind the fascist association is that Korea was a Japanese colony from 1910 to 1945 and that Japanese fascist thought in the 1930s and 1940s carried over into Soviet Army–liberated northern Korea from 1945 onwards. The argument continues that many Korean intellectuals had been co-opted in the colonial-fascist era and that these individuals were incorporated into the North Korean cultural apparatus (North Korea became an independent state in 1948), leading to a fascist-rooted state ideology that celebrates race.¹ The claim is superficial and impressionistic.

Other than the fact that its empirical ground is insufficient, the real problem with the opinion of fascism is that it fixates abstractly on ideology (a servant of politics) and neglects the political perspective and economic structure of postcolonial North Korea. In this regard, it is necessary to briefly consider some North Korean political history; revisit the writings of the late leader Kim Il Sung, whose authority is preeminent in North Korea; and consider how fascism in action has been described in fascism studies and Japanese studies. What the evidence reveals is that the North Korean system is incompatible with fascism.

Struggle against Imperial Japan

Anti-Japanism and anti-fascism are two policy lines that go hand in hand in North Korea. Both constitute the locus classicus of the political regime, the legitimacy of which derives from the armed struggle of Kim Il Sung and the “anti-Japanese guerrillas,” who fought the Imperial Japanese military and police in Manchuria, with some forays into Korea, from about 1931 to 1941. As Kim Han Gil’s official *Modern History of Korea* states, the “anti-Japanese struggle” was poised against the “Japanese imperialists, the ‘Asian ‘shock-troop’ of international fascism,” and their “imperialist colonial system.”²

North Korea identifies late Imperial Japan, along with Mussolini’s Italy and Hitler’s Germany, as a fascist state and holds a view of fascism that recalls the Stalinist Comintern in the 1930s. This is not surprising. Before northern Korea was liberated by the Soviet Army in 1945, Kim Il Sung, who became the leader of choice during the three-year Soviet occupation, had been a member of the Mao-led Chinese Communist Party (CCP) when it was a Comintern affiliate, a division commander in the CCP Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, and received military training in the Soviet Union, where he retreated and became a Soviet Army captain after his guerrillas were defeated in 1941.

The North Korean definition of fascism is summarizable as a reactionary *form of imperialism* that pursues aggressive war as a means of delivering itself from economic crisis. The term “reactionary” means extremely conservative or right-wing in politics, while the term “imperialism” refers to a type of capitalism based on the domination of monopoly capital (or finance capital) and the international system of creditor states and debtor states (that is, colonies and semi-colonies). In the specific case of the “fascist tyranny and colonial plunder of Japanese imperialism,” fascism manifested the following characteristics:

- anticomunism
- aggressive war
- intensified tyranny
- police information system
- militarization of the economy³

Kim Han Gil repeats Kim Il Sung's words from the February 27, 1936, Nanhutou Meeting that fascism was an anti-proletarian political movement that "appeared in many countries" and that the fascists employed the "means of sanguinary dictatorship and aggressive war" to "enslave not only the peoples of their own countries but also of all humanity and to fascistize the whole world."⁴ Considering that fascism studies scholars would agree that *sanguinary dictatorship* and *aggressive war* are historical and political features of fascism, one should not dismiss the North Korean account of fascism as incredible or extraordinary.

Kim Il Sung's political apocrypha, as Dae-Sook Suh has characterized the 1970s-published pre-liberation writings,⁵ speak of the "fascist, colonial repressive machinery" of Japanese imperialism as consisting of gallows, police, prisons, and troops, adding that "fascist colonial terrorist rule" involved the "large-scale infiltration of Japanese monopoly capital" into Korea. Confronting this political situation and influenced by the Seventh Comintern Congress in 1935, Kim and his guerrillas pursued a national united front policy against "fascist colonial rule" and appealed broadly to Korean intellectuals, national capitalists, peasants, petty-bourgeoisies, religious believers, students, youth, and workers in the national-liberation struggle.⁶

Despite the recent opinion that North Korea has links to fascism, Soviet Army liberation led to the formation of an "anti-fascist government,"⁷ in which Kim and his surviving Manchurian guerrillas vied with factions in the Soviet Army-founded Workers' Party of Korea, which was an authoritarian but less monolithic entity than it would become after the Korean War (1950–1953). With the postwar threat of Soviet "de-Stalinization," Kim was able to eliminate his rivals in the great purge of 1956 to 1960, an event preceded by his well-known anti-reformist speech of December 28, 1955, that emphasized the "Korean revolution" as the subject (*juche*) of party ideological work.⁸

The rest of Kim's story can be read in Suh's *Kim Il Sung*, since what is more critical to stress here is that in the period before Kim's emergence as the Great Leader (*suryōng*), the Soviet-established government in the northern half of the Korean Peninsula had a decidedly anti-Japanese, anti-fascist orientation that addressed itself to Korean workers, peasants, and patriots. This is documented in primary and secondary sources, which confute the fascist association.⁹ Historian Charles K. Armstrong says:

Although it bears some *superficial* resemblance to interwar Japan, especially in its rhetoric of the fatherly leader and the family (substituting Kim Il Sung for the Showa Emperor and, of course, the Koreans for the Japanese), North Korea in practice follows *neither* this Japanese model *nor* the pattern of fascism. North Korean corporatism [i.e., organic nationalism] combines Marxism-Leninism, in

both its Russian and Chinese variants, with Korean political culture to create an organic image of society.¹⁰

That was the case from the beginning. Marxism-Leninism was combined with messages of nationalism, national liberation, and national independence that had no counterpart in the Soviet satellites,¹¹ and North Korean cadres, after liberation, were mobilized to rectify the thirty-five-year legacy of Japanese colonialism and the decade of Japanese fascism.

With Soviet Army approval on March 23, 1946, Kim publicly announced the policies to “completely liquidate all the survivals of Japanese imperialist rule in the political and economic life of Korea”; “strictly ban the activities of fascist, anti-democratic political parties, organizations and individuals”; abolish all Japanese laws and judicial organs; and confiscate the land holdings of the Japanese government, Japanese nationals, and traitors.¹² What would replace the colonial-fascist capitalist system was based on the Soviet Stalinist system of national state-socialist ownership and bureaucratic economic planning.

Decolonizing the Mind

Besides economics, law, and politics, Kim Il Sung declared an initiative on May 24, 1946, to decolonize the mind through mass education.¹³ He ordered propagandists to “completely eliminate the survivals of Japanese imperialist ideas in literature, art and science” and “remove all traces of Japanese imperialism in their speech and behaviour.”¹⁴ But social psychology would prove more difficult than colonial-fascist political economy. Seven years later, on August 5, 1953, Kim complained at a party central committee plenum that “the ideological remnants of Japanese imperialism still persist in the minds of our people.”¹⁵

A major complaint about “bureaucracy” (that is, divorcing the party from the masses) came on April 1, 1955, when Kim told the central committee that functionaries “mentally associate” state and party organs with feudal and Japanese colonial government. The “survivals of rotten and outmoded ideas” were the cause, he said. “Our Party is a Marxist-Leninist party,” and party functionaries had to serve the national program of the Korean revolution by “living in the very midst of the masses.”¹⁶ Some problems Kim was addressing in behalf of the self-interest of the party leadership were fame seeking, flattery, incompetence, lying, prejudice, pretension, and punitiveness.

North Korea being under Chinese military occupation in this period (the Chinese would leave in 1958), Kim also proceeded to invoke Mao Zedong’s political authority on April 4, ordering the political training of “all Party functionaries and members” so that there would be “hundreds of persons” with mastery of Marxism-Leninism “creatively applied to Korean reality.”

Comrade Mao Tse-tung said, “If our Party has only 100 or 200 comrades who have acquired Marxism-Leninism not fragmentarily but systematically, not superficially

but substantially, then the fighting strength of our Party will be greatly enhanced and *our cause of defeating Japanese imperialism will be accelerated.*¹⁷

This quote would be removed from post-1970s redactions of Kim's writings, but the point is clear.¹⁸ The party was intensifying its struggle against the ideological carry-overs of Japanese colonialism and fascism in order to legitimate the postcolonial regime.

While North Korea never eliminated lying, prejudice, punitiveness, and the like, it would be an error to opine that deep fascist forces were behind these things or driving the ruling Marxist-Leninist ideology. The society was in psychological transition, a socially conditioned mentality lagging behind a rapidly overturned economy. Where there was once landlord-capitalism, there was now a *deformed workers' state*, with nationalized, state-run industries and agricultural cooperatives, aiming for socialism and communism in one country.¹⁹ It is not astonishing that survivals of "feudal and capitalist ideologies" were still lingering into the late 1950s.

This "obsolete ideology" could be found in intellectuals, lawyers, peasants, scientists, technicians, and workers. The party, whose central committee in 1958 was already composed of anti-Japanese fighters,²⁰ thus persisted in mass agitation against colonial-era mindsets incompatible with Marxism-Leninism and Korean patriotism. In his November 20, 1958, speech "On Communist Education," Kim listed Imperial Japan with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, highlighted the Japanese desire to conquer Asia, and ordered that working people in factories, farming and fishing villages, and mines be educated in "Red ideas."²¹

Although North Korea is not, nor has it ever been, the "monolithic" society and "single-hearted" community official media claim the country to be, it was the post-Korean War generation that would be most influenced by intensified party education. North Koreans born in the 1950s to 1980s had no historical contact with Japanese fascist ideology proper — the supernatural and imperialistic State Shintō doctrine of *Kokutai*²² — growing up instead with the secular heroic legends of Kim Il Sung, *Juche* ideology (*juche sasang*), and, from 1998, *Songun* (military-first) ideology, Kim Jong Il's development of *Juche* in the crisis period following the 1991 collapse of the Soviet economic benefactor.

Juche ideology was first used in 1962 in response to the Sino-Soviet split, signifying the "independent line" survival strategy of North Korean national state-socialism, and entered the revised state constitution of 1972 as a "creative application of Marxism-Leninism to our country's reality."²³ Developed into *Juche* philosophy (*juche cholhak*) in the 1970s, the emergent thought system combined anthropocentric principles from Korean Shilhak Neo-Confucianism and materialist principles from Soviet Marxism-Leninism. As with its political form, *Juche* philosophy remained committed to the nationalist Stalinist program of constructing "socialism in one country" (*han nara sahoejuüi*).²⁴

National State-Socialism

While the political history before and after the founding of North Korea involved a struggle against Japanese colonial-fascism in economics, ideology, law, and politics, what has tempted the fascist association of late is the role of ethnic nationalism in North Korea. Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, not to mention the official Korean Central News Agency, espouse great pride in the Korean ethnic race (*minjok*) and combine nationalist racial glorification with radical and socialistic phraseology. Glorification of ethnicity and race is not a case of fascism, however; nor is state-endorsed racism for that matter.

Robert O. Paxton's authoritative *The Anatomy of Fascism* defines fascism as follows:

Fascism may be defined as a form of political behavior marked by obsessive preoccupation with community decline, humiliation, or victimhood and by compensatory cults of unity, energy, and purity, in which a mass-based party of committed nationalist militants, working in uneasy but effective *alliance with traditional elites*, abandons democratic liberties and pursues with *redemptive violence* and without ethical or legal restraints goals of *internal cleansing and external expansion*.²⁵

While this passage is specifically illustrative of Italian and German fascism, Paxton acknowledges the Japanese variant that was imposed from above. E. Bruce Reynolds in his edited *Japan in the Fascist Era* highlights the fundamental commonalities:

[T]he leaders of all three countries [Italy, Germany, and Japan] saw themselves as riding a common global political tide. They promoted irrational nationalist myths in a quest to mobilize and absolutely unify their peoples, suppressed dissent, and expanded aggressively. They also exalted the state over the individual, although ultimately upholding the concept of private property.²⁶

The point on the economic perspective of fascism cannot be overstated: “[A]ll the fascist regimes ultimately upheld the private property rights of cooperative citizens.” This was an effort to “collectivize a capitalist economy,” says Reynolds, not operate it directly by the state.²⁷

Paxton states the following about the German case: “That there was some *mutual advantage* [between capitalists and fascists] is beyond doubt. Capitalism and fascism made *practicable bedfellows* (though not inevitable ones, nor always comfortable ones).”²⁸ Under German fascism, there were “autonomous concentrations of inherited social and economic power,” and the Nazi Party “jostled with the state bureaucracy, industrial and agricultural proprietors, churches, and other traditional elites for power.”²⁹ Japan had the bureaucracy, emperor, landlords, militarists, radical Shintō ultranationalists, and *zaibatsu*.

North Korea simply does not fit the economic and political model of fascism. The “absolute majority” of leaders in state organs were, as Kim Il Sung said in August 1953, of worker and peasant background.³⁰ As for economic structure, North Korea

in November 1954 can be taken as an example. While private economy still existed in this period — there were a few private enterprises, and small-commodity economy predominated in agriculture — the national state-socialist sector was expanding with the nationalization of banks, factories, transport, and other means of production; the introduction of experimental agricultural cooperatives; and the establishment of state-socialist and semi-state-socialist forms:

- agro-stock farms
- consumers' cooperatives
- farm machine and draft-animal hire stations
- fishermen's cooperatives
- peasants' banks
- rural sideline producers' cooperatives
- state-run irrigation³¹

Because of economic deformations under Japanese colonialism, which did not adequately develop Korean capitalism, northern Korea required protection of national capital and a limited private sector alongside state ownership and economic planning after Soviet Army liberation. While a law on the nationalization of major industries was promulgated on August 10, 1946, communication, electricity, railways, and transportation being nationalized by the end of the year, private ownership was dominant in medium- and small-scale industry. Ninety percent of industries were state owned by 1947, though, with more than 50 percent of state revenue coming from this sector in 1949.³²

Ironically, U.S. bombing during the Korean War devastated the economic infrastructure for small capitalist trade and industry in North Korea and catalyzed national state-socialist construction. Entrepreneurs, rich peasants, and traders found themselves in a dire objective situation and could not subsist without pooling their efforts and funds into party-led postwar reconstruction; of course, some of these class layers did resist.³³ North Korea, at the time, was receiving assistance from the Soviet Union, Eastern Bloc, and China. By 1954, state-owned economy accounted for some 90 percent of industrial output, cooperative economy for 7 to 8 percent, and private economy for 2 to 3 percent.³⁴ Kim Il Sung said a “triumphant socialist system” was established by 1961.³⁵

Self-Defensive Nationalism

Unlike fascism, traditional elites in North Korea (landlords and comprador capitalists) were overthrown, their property confiscated and power dissolved. As for expansionist redemptive violence, North Korea has always been a militantly self-defensive state, its action in the special case of the Korean War being an outcome of the artificial division of the Korean Peninsula by the United States and Soviet Union. Moreover, despite chauvinistic racial rhetoric, North Korea does not practice internal cleansing (that is, systematic destruction of peoples). Although demographic data

is not available, there is a small minority of mixed, naturalized, and non-ethnic North Koreans, as well as expatriates, in the country.³⁶

What does self-defensive nationalism reflect in North Korea today? As seen in *Songun* ideology, which is sourced in *Juche* and was included in the revised 2009 constitution that deleted the no-longer-motivating “Communism,” it reflects post-Soviet national security concerns under conditions of protracted economic and ideological crisis.³⁷ *Songun* is a tactical reorientation of the North Korean party-state bureaucracy that legitimizes Kim Jong Il’s rule following the passing away of Kim Il Sung and aging anti-Japanese guerrillas; compensates for the decline in the efficacy, functions, and legitimacy of the ruling party; mobilizes support from the military; prioritizes the defense industry; and promotes political faith among regular North Koreans at a time when market forces are penetrating the foreign-aid-dependent and degraded national state-socialist economy.³⁸

Since the rise of *Songun* in 1998, corresponding with the rise of the National Defense Commission as the highest organ of state, valorization of the Korean People’s Army and military culture has stimulated some academic debate as to whether contemporary North Korea is a militarized party-state, which it became with Kim Il Sung’s Maoist-influenced “military line” in 1962, or a form of military dictatorship. Despite non-consensus, the more intensified militaristic culture in North Korea today is another temptation for the fascist association, which has designated the country a far-right military-first state. The implication is that military dictatorship is essentially fascist.

Paxton explains, “Fascism is easily confused with military dictatorship,” since fascist leaders militarize their societies. “But while all fascisms are militaristic, military dictatorships are not always fascist. [...] Military dictatorships are far commoner than fascisms [...] and have existed since there have been warriors.”³⁹ Self-defensive militaristic nationalism in North Korea, which glorifies the North Korean people as a military-first ethnic race (*sōngun minjok*), is not fascist, but it does have right-wing features.⁴⁰ *Songun* may be termed a right orientation *within* a left-nationalist political perspective.

While North Korea is not a liberal democracy or a social democracy, it is a self-defensively oriented country with a history of nationalist struggle against fascism. North Korea, as a state, comes out of the political tradition of national-Stalinism.⁴¹ This is not a pejorative. The national-Stalinist states were the ex-satellite independent roaders that rejected Soviet “de-Stalinization,” preserved orthodox Stalinism, and appealed to ethnic nationalism for popular support.⁴² Rather than there being fascism in North Korea, the country is in transition to “market socialism,” as economist Soo-Ho Lim has explained.

North Korea began decentralization reforms in the mid-1980s—to weather economic difficulties with the Soviet Union and China, as well as competition with South Korea—forming the basis for the rapid rise of markets in the mid-1990s, during the great famine (1996–1999), and adoption of a “reformist socialist system” with the July 2002 price and wage reforms. Presently, a “dual economic system” with market and planning mechanisms sustains the regime. Besides that, the political and social sta-

tus of managerial officials is rising, and in the expanding market network, financiers are evolving into capitalists.⁴³

Significant economic and sociological changes have occurred and are occurring in North Korea, portending a system of authoritarian capitalism presided over by a national-Stalinist government. As market measures are adopted and attempts are made to attract foreign investment, the North Korean regime will accommodate new relations of labor and capital by tactically modifying its ideological claims to “socialism” and committing itself to more populist forms of Korean nationalism in order to divert attention from social inequality, to ensure a social base, and to resist foreign interference in internal affairs.

Conclusion

The opinion that North Korea has something to do with fascism is a case of mistaken identity. North Korea is a transitional national-Stalinist state with a pre-liberation and post-liberation history of struggle against Japanese imperialism, colonialism, and fascism. Systemically, North Korean national state-socialism does not exhibit the fundamental economic and political characteristics of fascism: aggressive foreign expansion, alliance with traditional elites, redemptive violence, defense of private property relations, or a policy of racial genocide. Why, then, is the association being made?

Although it is not clear what is motivating the “North Korea and fascism” claim, the opinion has some precedent in the concept of “Red fascism” introduced by American journalists in the 1930s.⁴⁴ In 1939, for example, a *New York Times* editorial stated that “Hitlerism is brown communism, Stalinism is red fascism,” and “the only real ‘ideological issue’ is one between democracy, liberty and peace on the one hand and despotism, terror and war on the other.”⁴⁵ What one sees in “Red fascism” is the blurring of two different systems, coupled with a highly simplistic dichotomy (democracy-liberty-peace vs. despotism-terror-war) that does not contribute to political-scientific understanding.⁴⁶

The recent association of North Korea with fascism would appear, in the light of “Red fascism,” to be something of an ideological residue from the Cold War era, an attempt to influence perception in a tendentious direction. While the Stalinist Soviet Union was an enormous industrial state that may have posed a political threat to Western geostrategic interests and spheres of influence, North Korea is too small, impoverished, and dysfunctional to bear comparison.⁴⁷ The more central point, however, is this: the connection of North Korea with fascism is factually erroneous, whatever its motivation.

Notes

1. See B. R. Myers, *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves—and Why It Matters* (Brooklyn, NY: Melville House, 2010); and Deborah Richards, “Reclusive Poker,” Australia Network, <http://www.australianetwork.com/newsline/archives.htm?site=201109#videoplayer> (accessed October 23, 2011).

2. Han Gil Kim, *Modern History of Korea* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1979), pp. 177–178.
3. Ibid., pp. 95, 98.
4. Ibid., p. 97. See Il Sung Kim, *The Tasks of Communists in Strengthening and Developing of the Anti-Japanese National-Liberation Struggle* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), p. 11.
5. Dae-Sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 305, 398n12.
6. Il Sung Kim, *The Tasks of Korean Communists* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1972), pp. 3, 15, 13; Kim Han Gil, p. 97.
7. Robert Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee, *Communism in Korea*, Vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 289n83.
8. Il Sung Kim, “On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing *Juche* [the Subject] in Ideological Work,” *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1965), pp. 315–340, p. 315.
9. See related references to anti-fascism in Robert Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee, *Communism in Korea*, Vol. 1, pp. 217–218, 289n83, 330, 359; Robert Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee, *Communism in Korea*, Vol. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 920; and Dae-Sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement, 1918–1948* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 202.
10. Charles K. Armstrong, “The Nature, Origins, and Development of the North Korean State,” *The North Korean System in the Post-Cold War Era*, ed. Samuel S. Kim (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 39–63, pp. 44–45; emphasis added.
11. Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 189.
12. Il Sung Kim, “Twenty Point Platform,” *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1965), pp. 1–3, pp. 1, 2.
13. The concept of “decolonizing the mind” is adopted from Ngũgi wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004).
14. Il Sung Kim, “Workers in Culture Should Become Combatants on the Cultural Front,” *Duties of Literature and Arts in Our Revolution* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1972), pp. 1–5, p. 4.
15. Il Sung Kim, “Everything for the Postwar Rehabilitation and Development of the National Economy,” *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1965), pp. 161–209, p. 206.
16. Il Sung Kim, “On Eliminating Bureaucracy,” *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1965), pp. 273–287, pp. 275, 277.
17. Il Sung Kim, “On Some Questions Concerning Party and State Work in the Present Stage of the Socialist Revolution,” *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1965), pp. 288–314, p. 294; emphasis added.
18. See, for example, Il Sung Kim, “On Some Questions Concerning Party and State Work in the Present Stage of the Socialist Revolution,” *Selected Works*, Vol. 9 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1982), pp. 241–265, p. 247.
19. On the concept of the *deformed workers’ state*, see Tim Wohlforth, “Cuba and the Deformed Workers State,” Marxists Internet Archive, <http://www.marxists.org/history//etol/document/icl-spartacists/cuba/cuba-dws.html#wohlforth> (accessed October 23, 2011). See also David North, *The Heritage We Defend: A Contribution to the History of the Fourth International* (Detroit: Labor Publications, 1988), pp. 144, 146–147, 159–161, 166–167, 178–179, 180–181, 184, 233, 292, 353–354, 416.
20. Il Sung Kim, “On Communist Education,” *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1965), pp. 404–430, p. 426.
21. Ibid., pp. 408, 419, 430.
22. On Kokutai, see *Kokutai no Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, trans. John Owen Gauntlett, ed. Robert King Hall (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949); and Walter A. Skya, *Japan’s Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shintō Ultranationalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).
23. Kwang-Shick Kang, “*Juche* Idea and the Alteration Process in Kim Il-Sung’s Works: A

Study on How to Read Kim Il-Sung's Works," KSAA Conference 2001, Monash University, 2001, pp. 363–374, p. 363, <http://www.arts.monash.edu/korean/ksaa/conference/33kwangshickkang.pdf> (accessed October 23, 2011); and *Socialist Constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1972), p. 2.

24. North Korean sources justify the Stalinist perspective of "socialism in one country" by invoking the "law of uneven development of capitalism."

25. Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), p. 218; emphasis added.

26. E. Bruce Reynolds, "Peculiar Characteristics: The Japanese Political System in the Fascist Era," *Japan in the Fascist Era*, ed. E. Bruce Reynolds (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 155–197, p. 186; emphasis added

27. Ibid., p. 176.

28. Paxton, p. 208; emphasis added.

29. Ibid., 212.

30. Kim, "Everything for the Postwar Rehabilitation and Development of the National Economy," p. 202.

31. Il Sung Kim, "On Our Party's Policy for Further Development of Agriculture," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1965), pp. 210–233, pp. 217–218.

32. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950*, p. 156.

33. Il Sung Kim, *On Socialist Construction and the South Korean Revolution in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1968), pp. 15, 19, 20; and Il Sung Kim, *On Some Problems of Our Party's Juche Idea and the Government of the Republic's Internal and External Policies* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1972), pp. 3–4.

34. Kim, "On Our Party's Policy for Further Development of Agriculture," p. 217; Il Sung Kim, "Let Us Exert All Our Strength for the Country's Unification and Independence and for Socialist Construction in the Northern Part of the Country," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1965), pp. 234–250, pp. 240–241.

35. Kim, *On Socialist Construction and the South Korean Revolution in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, pp. 11, 12.

36. A prominent case is that of U.S. Army deserter James Dresnok and his family in Pyongyang. Dresnok defected to North Korea in 1962 and was granted North Korean citizenship in 1972. He has two grown sons, James and Ted, from his late wife Doina Bumbea, an alleged abductee from Romania who died of lung cancer in 1997. Dresnok married again, in 1999, to Dada, the daughter of a Togolese diplomat and an ethnic North Korean woman. Their son is Tony. Another U.S. Army deserter, Charles Jenkins, who also became a North Korean citizen and who married Japanese abductee Hitomi Soga, explains that his two daughters and other mixed children in North Korea "were treated more like exotic specimens rather than half-breeds or mongrels." See Charles Robert Jenkins and Jim Frederick, *The Reluctant Communist: My Desertion, Court-Martial, and Forty-Year Imprisonment in North Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), p. 110.

37. The ideological crisis ensuing from the collapse of the Soviet Union required the deletion of discredited "Marxism-Leninism" from the revised constitution in 1992.

38. See further discussion in Sung Chull Kim, "Military-First Politics and Changes in Party-Military Relations," *North Korea under Kim Jong Il: From Consolidation to System Dissonance* (Albany: State University of New York Press), pp. 81–104. Kim, p. xiii, says military-first politics has "replaced" the anti-Japanese guerrilla tradition; however, it would be more accurate to say "supplemented," since military-first politics is justified on the basis of the struggle of Kim Il Sung and the anti-Japanese guerrillas. See Kwang Sok Ho, "Songun Idea with Deep Roots," *Korea Today*, No. 658, April 2011, Naenara (My Country), <http://www.naenara.com.kp/en/periodic/todaykorea/index.php?contents+6587+2011-04+152+17> (accessed October 23, 2011); and Hong Su Ri, "Establisher of Songun Idea," *Pyongyang Times*, No. 28, July 2011, Naenara (My Country), <http://www.nae-nara.com.kp/en/periodic/times/index.php?contents+13881+2011-07-28+528+8> (accessed October 23, 2011).

39. Paxton, p. 216.

40. The phrase *sōngun minjok* was first used on the Korean Central News Agency website in 2003, with the partly transliterated-translated "Songun nation" appearing in an English-language article in the same year.

41. See Ivan T. Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944–1993: Detour from the Periphery to*

the Periphery (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 95, 129, 174; and Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Understanding National Stalinism: Legacies of Ceausescu's Socialism," *Stalinism for All Seasons: A Political History of Romanian Communism* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 18–36, p. 33.

42. See Cheng Chen and Ji-Yong Lee, "Making Sense of North Korea: 'National Stalinism' in Comparative-Historical Perspective," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (2007), pp. 459–475; and Andrei Lankov, *Crisis in North Korea: The Failure of De-Stalinization, 1956* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005).

43. See Soo-Ho Lim, *The Rise of Markets within a Planned Economy: A Forecast for North Korea's Economic Reform and System Change* (Seoul: Samsung Economic Research Institute, 2009). See also Jae-Cheon Lim and Injoo Yoon, "Institutional Entrepreneurs in North Korea: Emerging Shadowy Enterprises under Dire Economic Conditions," *North Korean Review*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Fall 2011), pp. 82–93, p. 88.

44. This subject has been discussed in Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, "Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930's–1950's," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (April 1970), pp. 1046–1064; and Thomas R. Maddux, "Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism: The American Image of Totalitarianism in the 1930s," *Historian*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (November 1977), pp. 85–103. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6563.1977.tb01210.x>

45. "The Russian Betrayal," *New York Times*, September 18, 1939, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=FB0E11FE3B54107A93CAA81782D85F4D8385F9> (accessed October 23, 2011).

46. See Roger D. Markwick, "Communism: Fascism's 'Other'?" *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, ed. R. J. B. Bosworth (New York: Oxford, 2010), pp. 339–361.

47. While North Korea may possess some nuclear capability, this is a self-defense measure, especially in view of U.S. military action in Iraq and, more recently, Libya. Pyongyang otherwise prefers normalized relations and "peaceful coexistence" with Washington. One should note that the U.S. and North Korea interact through academic and professional exchanges, friendship organizations, NGOs, and tourism. See Karin J. Lee and Gi-Wook Shin, eds., *U.S.-DPRK Educational Exchanges: Assessment and Future Strategy* (Stanford, CA: Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, 2011), Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, http://fsi.stanford.edu/publications/usdprk_educational_exchanges_assessment_and_future_strategy (accessed October 23, 2011).

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